

The Impact of Corporate Social Irresponsibility on the Consumer-Brand Relationship

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Abstract

Corporate social irresponsibility can negatively impact consumers' relationships with brands by causing them to question organizations' intentions and degree of responsibility. This research explores the moderating role of ambivalence, prior corporate reputation and prior brand attachment on the relation between consumers' perceived ethicality (CPE) and negative word-of-mouth (NWOM), brand preference and purchase intention. We chose misleading advertising as an irresponsible business practice and conducted an online survey of 238 consumers in France. The findings show that when prior brand reputation is not good/bad, CPE is less effective in reducing NWOM. High ambivalence weakens the positive effect of CPE on purchase intention, and when prior brand attachment is low, CPE is less effective in predicting brand preference. This study provides valuable insight into how an immoral business practice influences consumers' brand perception.

Keywords: *corporate social irresponsibility; ethics; brand*

Track: Social Responsibility & Ethics